

2005 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Risk Behaviors of Montana Youth

Have Attempted Suicide vs. Have Not Attempted Suicide

January 2006

Prepared for

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Health Enhancement and Safety Division
HIV/STD Education Program
PO Box 202501
Helena, Montana 59620-2501

by

Dodge Data Systems, Inc.
2905 N Montana Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601



Linda McCulloch, Superintendent

Montana Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, Montana 59620-2501
www.opi.mt.gov

2005 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey Risk Behaviors of Montana Youth Have Attempted Suicide vs. Have Not Attempted Suicide

Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is administered by the Montana Office of Public Instruction every two years to 7th and 8th grade students and to high school students. The purpose of the survey is to help monitor the prevalence of behaviors that not only influence youth health, but also put youth at risk for the most significant health and social problems that can occur during adolescence. While all schools in Montana can participate in the survey on a volunteer basis, approximately 50 high schools are randomly selected to be included with high schools from other states for national data and reports.

The 2005 YRBS was conducted in February of 2005 with 9,178 7th and 8th grade students and 10,259 high school students. This represents approximately 38 percent of all 7th and 8th grade students and 21 percent of all high school students in Montana. Schools administering the survey were provided with detailed written instructions on conducting a random survey in their schools. To encourage accurate responses to sensitive questions, a strict protocol was implemented to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participating students.

Survey Validity and Limitations

Data used in this report from the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey are not based on a random sample survey. Therefore, it would not be valid to generalize the findings from this survey to all 7th and 8th grade and high school students in Montana. It is only valid to attribute the results of this survey to the students who reported their behaviors in response to the items in the questionnaire. In addition, respondents in self-reported surveys may have a tendency to underreport behaviors that are socially undesirable, unhealthy, or illegal (alcohol consumption, drug use, seat belt non-usage, etc.) and overreport behaviors that are socially desirable (amount of exercise, etc.).

Montana Youth and Suicide

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in Montana among youth ages 10-24. It is the leading cause of preventable death for ages 10 to 14. While the rate of youth suicide in Montana has declined over the past decade, it is still nearly twice the U.S. average. During 2000-2002, the suicide rate among Montana youth ages 10-24 was 12.58 per 100,000, compared to the U.S. rate of 6.96 per 100,000.

In the 12 months prior to taking the 2005 YRBS, 15 percent of 7th and 8th grade students and 18 percent of high school students reported considering suicide. Twelve percent of 7th and 8th grade students and ten percent of high school students reported actually attempting suicide in this same time period.

Are Montana youth who have attempted suicide more apt to engage in other high-risk behaviors than those students who have not attempted suicide? For example, are youth who have attempted suicide more likely to also use alcohol, use marijuana or inhalants, fight with other students, use chewing tobacco, or be sexually active? These questions were investigated using a cross-tabulation of the 2005 Montana YRBS data. The results of this investigation are reported in the following section of this report.

Survey Results

For the purposes of the report, youth that are classified as having attempted suicide are those Montana youth in 2005 that reported attempting suicide one or more times during the 12 months prior to taking the YRBS. The risk behaviors that were investigated are listed in Figure 1 for 7th and 8th grade students and in Figure 2 for high school youth.

Results of the investigation indicate the following:

- **Montana youth who have attempted suicide are more likely to have used/abused alcohol than youth who have not attempted suicide.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are more than twice as likely (42 percent vs. 20 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have had at least one drink of alcohol in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are more likely (60 percent vs. 44 percent) to have had a drink of alcohol in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are four times more likely (16 percent vs. 4 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have driven a car after drinking alcohol in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are more likely (27 percent vs. 17 percent) to have driven a car after drinking alcohol than students who have not attempted suicide.

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are over three times more likely (30 percent vs. 9 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have been involved in binge drinking (five or more drinks of alcohol in a row) in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are more likely (47 percent vs. 31 percent) to have been involved in binge drinking.

- **Montana youth who have attempted suicide are more likely to have smoked or used chewing tobacco than youth who have not attempted suicide.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are over three times more likely (31 percent vs. 9 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have smoked cigarettes in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are nearly twice as likely (41 percent vs. 22 percent) to have smoked cigarettes on one or more days in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are over twice as likely (13 percent vs. 5 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have used chewing tobacco in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are more likely (21 percent vs. 14 percent) to have used chewing tobacco in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who have attempted suicide are more likely to have used methamphetamines than youth who have not attempted suicide.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are six times more likely (12 percent vs. 2 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have used methamphetamines in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are over three times more likely (19 percent vs. 5 percent) to have used methamphetamines in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who have attempted suicide are more likely to have used marijuana than youth who have not attempted suicide.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are four times more likely (24 percent vs. 6 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have used marijuana in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are nearly twice as likely (32 percent vs. 17 percent) to have used marijuana in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who have attempted suicide are more likely to have, in their lifetimes, sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high than youth who have not attempted suicide.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are nearly three times more likely (34 percent vs. 12 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high in their lifetimes. Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are over two times more likely (30 percent vs. 12 percent) to have sniffed glue or used inhalants in their lifetimes to get high.

- **Montana youth who have attempted suicide are more likely to be sexually active than youth who have not attempted suicide.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are nearly four times more likely (23 percent vs. 6 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have had sexual intercourse during the three months prior to taking the survey. Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are more likely (44 percent vs. 28 percent) to have had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who have attempted suicide are more likely to have been in at least one fight in the 12 months prior to taking the survey than youth who have not attempted suicide.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have attempted suicide are more likely (57 percent vs. 39 percent) than students who have not attempted suicide to have been in a fight in the 12 months prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who have attempted suicide are more likely (44 percent vs. 28 percent) to have been in a fight in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who have not attempted suicide are more likely to think of themselves as being at “about the right weight” than youth who have attempted suicide.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who have not attempted suicide are more likely (58 percent vs. 50 percent) than students who have attempted suicide to think that they are about at the right weight. Similarly, Montana high school youth who have not attempted suicide are more likely (55 percent vs. 49 percent) to think of themselves as being at about the right weight than high school youth who have attempted suicide.

Clearly, Montana youth who have attempted suicide also place themselves at higher risk for negative health consequences from other undesirable behaviors than youth who have not attempted suicide. This association exists in every behavior risk category, including diet.

Table 1
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Montana 7th and 8th Grade Students
Have Attempted Suicide vs. Have Not Attempted Suicide

Health Risk Behavior	Have Attempted Suicide	Have Not Attempted Suicide
Had at least one drink of alcohol during the past 30 days (Q41)	41.6%	20.2%
Drove a car when drinking alcohol during the past 30 days (Q11)	16.1%	4.3%
Had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row during the past 30 days (Q42)	29.9%	9.3%
Smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days (Q30)	30.5%	8.7%
Used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days (Q36)	13.3%	5.4%
Used methamphetamines at least once during their lifetime (Q52)	11.6%	1.5%
Used marijuana at least once during the past 30 days (Q46)	23.8%	6.4%
Sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high during their life (Q50)	33.5%	12.4%
Had sexual intercourse during the past three months (Q60)	22.7%	6.2%
Had been in at least one fight during the past 12 months (Q18)	57.2%	38.8%
Tend to think of themselves as about the right weight (Q64)	50.3%	58.0%

Figure 1
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Montana 7th and 8th Grade Students
Have Attempted Suicide vs. Have Not Attempted Suicide

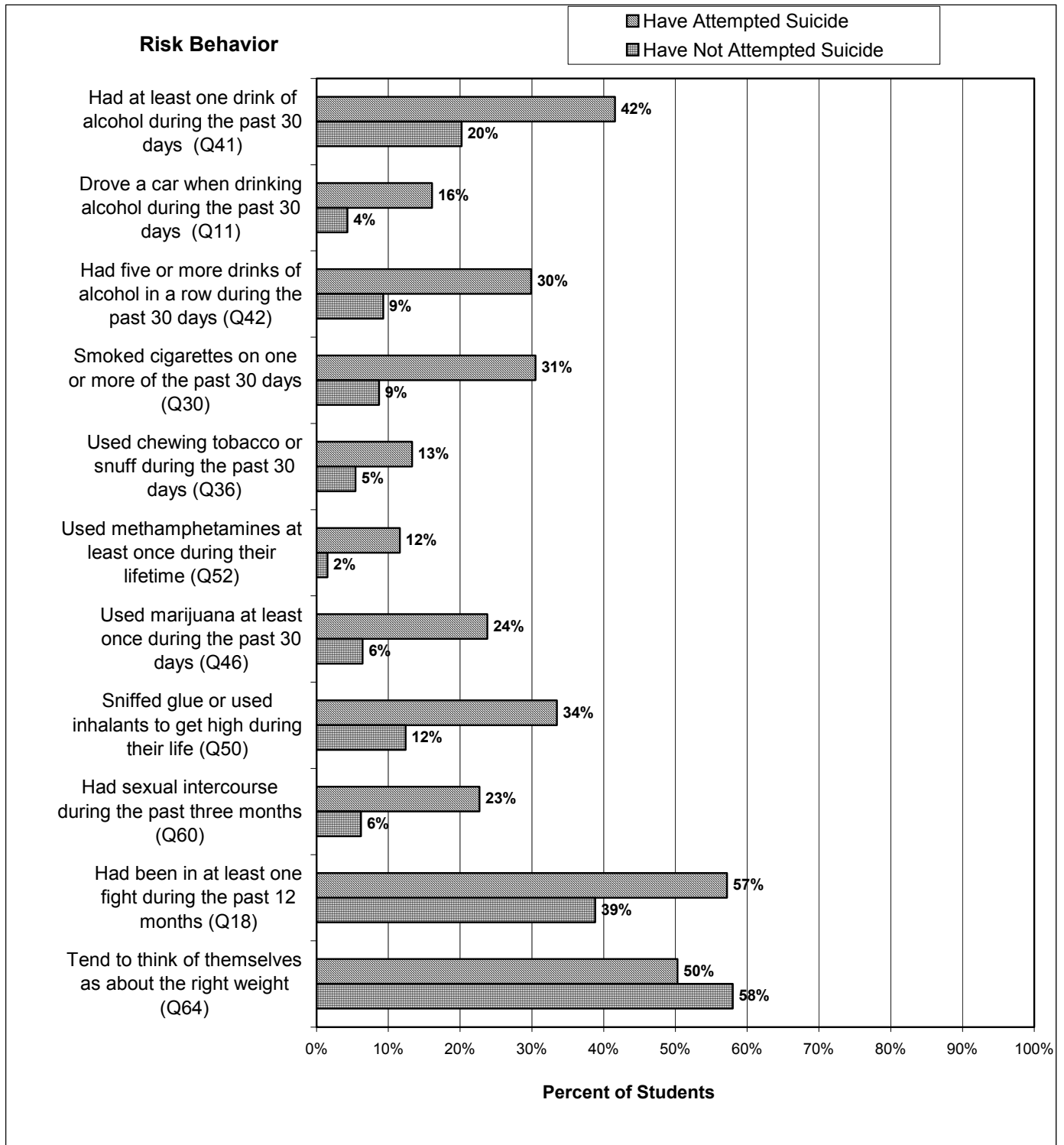


Table 2
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Montana High School Students
Have Attempted Suicide vs. Have Not Attempted Suicide

Health Risk Behavior	Have Attempted Suicide	Have Not Attempted Suicide
Had at least one drink of alcohol during the past 30 days (Q41)	60.2%	44.3%
Drove a car when drinking alcohol during the past 30 days (Q11)	26.7%	17.1%
Had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row during the past 30 days (Q42)	46.7%	30.8%
Smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days (Q30)	41.3%	21.8%
Used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days (Q36)	20.9%	14.2%
Used methamphetamines at least once during their lifetime (Q52)	18.5%	5.0%
Used marijuana at least once during the past 30 days (Q46)	32.3%	17.2%
Sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high during their life (Q50)	29.5%	12.1%
Had sexual intercourse during the past three months (Q60)	44.2%	27.6%
Had been in at least one fight during the past 12 months (Q18)	43.8%	27.5%
Tend to think of themselves as about the right weight (Q64)	48.9%	55.2%

Figure 2
2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Montana High School Students
Have Attempted Suicide vs. Have Not Attempted Suicide

